

RECAPITALIZATION AND UNIT SET FIELDING

LTG Paul J. Kern

"The legacy force, that magnificent Army we see busily deployed abroad today, will remain the force of choice should this Nation go to war anytime in the next 15 years. Its readiness to fight is paramount if we are going to have the luxury of time and investment to get the objective force right."

—**Army Chief of Staff**
GEN Eric K. Shinseki
Excerpt from address to
Association of the
United States Army (AUSA),
Oct. 17, 2000

Introduction

Upon announcing plans to create a strategically responsive objective force that will dominate the full spectrum of operations, Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera and Army Chief of Staff GEN Eric K. Shinseki made it clear that to meet its responsibilities as outlined in Title 10-United States Code, the Army must transform to a more deployable and responsive force.

The focus on developing an objective force that meets this Nation's strategic military requirements from 2008 onward does not relieve us of our commitment to the American people to fight and win any war during the interim. The age and condition of today's equipment presents us with a considerable challenge to meet that commitment when potential adversaries have access to increasingly sophisticated capabilities that can be deployed against us.

Parts of the current force must remain viable for many more years, until the objective force is fielded and meets the wide variety of missions for which it is being developed. If nothing is done now to address our aging equipment, the average age of critical systems such as the Abrams tank, AH-64 Apache, UH-60 BLACK HAWK, CH-47 Chinook, and Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle will exceed their 20-year expected service lives by 2010. The potential exists for the Army to move into the second decade of this century with a significant portion of its forces incapable of meeting a world-class threat.

Recapitalization Solution

Immediate recapitalization of today's equipment will prevent this vulnerability from occurring. Recapitalization is the maintenance and systemic upgrade of currently fielded systems to ensure operational readiness and a "zero-time/zero-mile" system. Through the recapitalization process, the clock is reset on aging equipment.

The Army's goal for recapitalization is to maintain the average age of each selected system at or below half the expected service life for the system by 2010. Recapitalization will not only extend the life of legacy systems, but will also reduce their ownership costs and increase their reliability and capabilities.

Because of its importance in maintaining operational readiness of today's equipment, Army leaders have identified

recapitalization as one of the three critical axes of the transformation. Other critical axes are research and development to evolve future technologies and creation of the interim force.

Status

The Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans (DCSOPS) identified and prioritized 21 initial systems for recapitalization. The 10 highest priority systems on that list (M1 Abrams tank, AH-64, UH-60, CH-47, the Armored Vehicle Launched Bridge, M9 ACE, M88 Recovery Vehicle, M2/M3 Bradley, the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), and the PATRIOT Air Defense System) are those most critical to maintaining the readiness of the digitized Counterattack Corps—III Corps. The modernization of the Counterattack Corps is necessary to preserve the Nation's heavy combat capability until the transformation is complete.

To meet recapitalization objectives, selected systems will be either sustained or selectively upgraded. Both paths insert new technologies and produce systems with a zero-time/zero-mile standard. The difference between the two paths is that sustainment programs will produce an end product having the same model number as the system that entered the program, while the selected upgrade programs will produce an end product with a new model number signifying added capability. For example, when an M1A1 tank is inducted into the Abrams Integrated Management (AIM) XXI Program,

a sustainment program, the finished product will be a zero-mile M1A1 tank with newly inserted technology.

An M1A1 tank entering the System Enhancement Program (SEP), a selected upgrade program, will be returned to the unit as an M1A2 model tank. Despite their differences, both paths produce systems with enhanced operational capabilities, extended lives, reduced ownership costs, and improved reliability.

Today, the AIM XXI Program is the only existing sustainment program, and there are currently seven ongoing selected upgrade programs—the M1A2 SEP, Hercules, Bradley A3, MLRS A1, M113 A3, M915A4, and the D7 Dozer.

Funding

The FY 02-07 Program Objective Memorandum (POM) includes funding for only \$15.5 billion of the \$23 billion needed to recapitalize the 21 DCSOPS-selected systems. At this funding level, recapitalization can only begin on 16 of these systems. Without additional funds, only 2 of the top 10 recapitalization programs, BLACK HAWK and PATRIOT, and the M915 Tractor will achieve the half-life metric by 2010. The remaining 13 funded programs will only be able to slow the aging process. This piecemeal recapitalization is insufficient to ensure the readiness of the force during the transformation. The Army Chief of Staff and other senior leaders are continuing to stress the importance of recapitalization to secure full funding for this critical effort.

Unit Set Fielding

The recapitalization effort is only one of many challenges facing the Army as we begin the monumental task of transforming our industrial-age force to a dominant objective force operating in the information age. The Army must also improve the way it transitions new systems from the materiel developer to the field.

Under the current process, we field new systems according to the Department of the Army Master Priority List. In many cases, units receive multiple, sequential fieldings during any given year. Each fielding, however well coordinated, has an impact upon the unit's readiness and

operational tempo. With multiple fieldings, units have difficulty maximizing the capabilities of new equipment and maintaining peak unit performance.

Future Combat Systems (FCS) will be developed as a fully integrated "system of systems." This approach requires concurrent fielding of networked systems. Fielding of individual, uncoordinated platforms no longer delivers warfighting capability for units. Fielding the objective force using the current process would fail to optimize the capabilities for which the FCS is being developed.

The Army Vice Chief of Staff has designated the DCSOPS as the Army's System of Systems Manager. To minimize unit disruption while maximizing operational efficiency, the DCSOPS will indicate, in a forthcoming prime directive, that future fieldings will be conducted in fully coordinated sets of equipment called Unit Set Fielding (USF). At a minimum, a unit set includes a backbone of digital command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems and weapon systems necessary to provide a common operational picture, enhanced situational awareness, and increased lethality. USF will allow the Army to synchronize fielding of interrelated and interdependent systems.

The "single-system" Total Package Fielding concept remains relevant as a subset of the USF process. In the past, as we fielded a single system, the receiving unit had to consider the impact of that one system on its doctrine, training, leader development, organization, materiel, and soldiers. Under the USF process, units receiving new equipment will have to consider the impact of numerous new systems on those same factors. The new process is aimed at reducing the destabilizing effect of sequential fieldings. It will also act as a major enhancement to system integration and, thus, promises to accelerate the force development process.

USF will begin with the 1st Cavalry Division and will dovetail into the transformation process with the fielding of the 3rd Interim Brigade Combat Team. Thereafter, USF will apply to all Active and Reserve component fieldings.

The DCSOPS will determine the priority and timing of specific USF using the Army Modernization Schedule (AMS) and related Army Order of Precedence. The AMS will identify the USF window for each unit. After the USF window has closed and the unit has trained with its new equipment, the unit's major command will be responsible for validating the unit's readiness to execute wartime missions. This process should smooth out the readiness rating spikes and valleys associated with sequential fieldings resulting in a more consistent readiness rating.

Conclusion

GEN Shinseki has directed us to meet the Army's transformation vision. The Army's mission has always been consistent—fight and win this Nation's wars. Maintaining our commitment to this mission will never end. We cannot allow our current equipment to deteriorate as we transform to an objective force. Recapitalization will ensure the Army's continued ability to execute the National Military Strategy before the transformation to the objective force is complete.

USF is another critical aspect that will ensure a smooth transition as we upgrade the capabilities of the current force to those of the objective force and provide the Army with a timely, complete, and integrated capability.

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